



## King's Research Portal

### *Document Version*

Early version, also known as pre-print

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

### *Citation for published version (APA):*

Milligan, T. (2020). The Ethics of Love for Animals. *Irish Philosophical Society Yearbook*.

### **Citing this paper**

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [librarypure@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:librarypure@kcl.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# The Ethics of Love for Animals<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract** *This is an exploration of the ethics of our love for animals. The first section defends the capacity of animals for love, and hence to reciprocate our love for them. The second provides an overview of various attempts to situate the importance of love within animal ethics. The final section suggests that the most promising way to make the connection between love and animal ethics may be through valuing and motivation. Love is, after all, the paradigmatic form of valuing, the way of valuing that most obviously motivates us to live our lives in the ways that we do.*

## I. The capacity of animals for love

I will begin with the obvious, nothing works as a completely general theory of love. There are always exceptions and anomalies, things that do not fit. An account of love, and more specifically, of the ethics of love for animals, requires a degree of caution rather than a formal specification of necessary and sufficient conditions for what the love in question involves. Nonetheless, there are some comparatively non-controversial things that can be said about most forms of love. For example, while the exact standing of love as an emotion, or as something else is disputed, there is a rough consensus that love is at least emotion-like in various ways.<sup>2</sup> It is not, for example, a strictly cognitive response and it seems to be connected to various sorts of felt bodily experiences, or rather dispositions towards such experiences. Like anger, jealousy, shame and guilt, love is also complex. It involves several things which are not easily disentangled. My preferred list includes affective dispositions, desires, and (a little more controversially) a cognitive component, i.e. something akin to a belief or appraisal. Accordingly, while accepting that love is not exclusively cognitive, I will nonetheless side with those who regard love as at least *partly* cognitive. This links love strongly to emotion, and also to vision and ‘appraisal’ rather than to ‘bestowal’ and projection even if we also happen to be disposed to project various qualities and accomplishments onto those we love. (Perhaps some of us do and so of us don’t.)

Broadly, when we love someone we have various dispositions towards the relevant affective responses and actions; we desire to be with the object of our love, or at least we desire that who or what we love should flourish or at least not come to certain kinds of serious harm. We also, figuratively and sometimes literally, see them in a way that we do not ordinarily see others, with care and attention. These are, of course, philosophical formulations. Ways of articulating the desires in question. Few agents would revert to the Aristotelian language of flourishing if asked ‘What is love?’ Rather, they would use some sort of shorthand for a more complex reality.

Here, I am also addressing love as a response to *particular* others. For the purposes of this paper, I will set aside love for that which goes beyond the individual: love for humanity, of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Previously delivered as a keynote paper for the 2017 Conference of the Cumann Fealsúnachta na hÉireann (Irish Philosophical Society) on Humans and Other Animals held at Carlow College in November 2017. Thanks go to the organisers for their guidance and patience.

<sup>2</sup> For the special case of romantic love, and a claim that it is more of a syndrome than an emotion, see Arina Pismenny and Jesse Prinz, ‘Is Love an Emotion?’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Love*, ed. by Christopher Grau and Aaron Smuts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). Smuts has also cast doubt upon the standing of love as an emotion, appealing to its duration rather than transitoriness and to the absence of ‘reasons for love’ in any sense that matches up with our reasons for emotional response. See Smuts, ‘Normative Reasons for Love, Part I.’ *Philosophy Compass* 9 (2014), 507-514.

sort that the later Kant and Gandhi considered important; love for species and types which figures in Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1949); and loving reverence for all living things in the manner of Albert Schweitzer *The Philosophy of Civilization* (1923), and E.O. Wilson's *Biophilia* (1984). This is not because I discount these loves. They seem, up to a point, both possible and admirable, even if a little overextended in Wilson's case. Instead, they are set aside in order to focus upon the place where all love begins. Love of the relevant sort is *by* particular beings (such as you, me, and everyone we know) and it is directed *towards* other particular beings. These other particular beings are often, but not always, other humans.

There is a strong line of thought which holds that such love *should or must* only be directed towards humans. This is the kind of story that we encounter in a good deal of the analytic literature on love. For David Velleman, in his classic paper on 'Love as a Moral Emotion', love is a recognition of personhood in a strong, broadly Kantian sense that will exclude love for non-humans because they are also non-persons. Yet Velleman allows that *in some sense* there is also a love (not our kind of love) which is 'felt for many things other than the possessors of a rational nature'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Niko Kolodny wants to allow that there is a love for non-persons, but insists that the philosophically interesting kind of love is for and by people like us. A determination to exclude animals and situate philosophically-interesting love within the context of cognitively demanding inter-personal relationships which also results in the implausible exclusion of humans who are not yet capable of such cognitively demanding relationships. (A high price to pay to keep animals out of the picture.)<sup>4</sup> Harry Frankfurt is more generous and allows that we can *in some sense* love animals but they certainly cannot love us in return. More specifically, on the Frankfurtian account, love requires not just desires but *identification* with desires, 'a lover identifies himself with what he loves.'<sup>5</sup> It requires something second-order, i.e. desires about desires. And such hierarchies of desire are something that rarely if ever characterise animal psychology. (Frankfurt says never, but I suspect that there may be outliers, occasional exceptions.) Here, it does not matter if we argue that some animals are, in fact, persons. That will simply be a terminological shift to the use of the concept in a less Kantian way. The point is that love is tied to the kind of beings who would match something close to the Kantian criteria even if there is a case for moving on from the latter.

One of the many curious features of such approaches is its *apriorism*. The fixed determination to set aside a growing body of evidence for love *by* animals, a body of evidence that has accrued over the past half-century and, perhaps, just as importantly, the growing evidence for animal grief which has accrued over the same period.<sup>6</sup> Here, I have shifted the discussion temporarily to the subject of love *by* animals rather than our love *for* them. I do this for a reason, because of a widespread idea that what makes other humans especially suitable as recipients of love is their capacity to reciprocate. The guiding thought is that love for humans is often well-invested because there can be a return. In Troy Jollimore's terms (and again restricting the concept

---

<sup>3</sup> David Velleman, 'Love as a Moral Emotion', *Ethics*, 109 (1999), 45-59 (p. 365).

<sup>4</sup> Niko Kolodny, 'Love as Valuing a Relationship', *Philosophical Review*, 112 (2003), 135-189 (p. 137)

<sup>5</sup> Harry Frankfurt, *Reasons of Love* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Useful summaries of the research can be found in the works of ethologist such as Bekoff and de Waal. For example, Marc Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals* (California: New World Library, 2007) and Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and Sex among Apes* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2017).

of personhood) ‘The special opportunity that love for persons affords us is the opportunity to care about something that can care about us.’<sup>7</sup>

By contrast, any inability of animals (by which I mean, *other* animals) to love us will cast doubt upon their appropriateness as recipients of our love, and will ultimately, if indirectly, cast doubt upon the depth of any love that we might happen to feel for them. If such love is based upon anthropomorphic delusions about reciprocation, e.g. the mistaken thought that ‘she understands every word I say’, how deep and genuine can the love be? If the love is based upon delusions, then we may not love the actual animal but rather a creature who isn’t there.

While reciprocation among humans is important to our living and faring well, I suspect that the exclusion of animals on this basis is misplaced, not only because we humans may love one another deeply, legitimately and even tragically, without reciprocation, but because many animals can and do return our love. (Not all, but many.) Other creatures do not, in other words, always lack the capacity to love. Indeed, their well-documented capacity to grieve presupposes a capacity to love. The two go together. We can see this from some simple reflections upon when grief is and is not possible. I, a human, may feel sorry for the unknown motorcyclist whose boots stick out from under a white sheet by the side of the road, but I cannot truly grieve for him. Rather, I can only grieve over the loss of things and beings with whom, and with which, I have a longer history of concern. There must be a history of emotional entanglement of the sort that is also integral to love. This leaves interesting problems about (i) love at first sight; and (ii) false grief, but there are ways in which they can be tackled which do not presuppose the sudden emergence of either love or grief as some form of emotion without history.

Even so, there are aspects of the hierarchical and cognitively-demanding models of love, such as the one set out by Harry Frankfurt (among others, e.g. Bennett Helm), which I do not wish to deny.<sup>8</sup> One of these is that love is not just a matter of desires, but of desires that connect up to one another, and by virtue of doing so may be said to be ‘deep’. We can well understand why such complex connections and networks require history, why they take time to form. There are, however, different ways to work with this insight about interconnection. As indicated before, Frankfurt suggests that love requires second order-desires: we have desires for the well-being of the other person and *we identify with* those desires, we desire to have them. This will, of course, make grief intelligible up to a point. When someone we love dies, there is no way for our first-order desires for their well-being to be satisfied, *yet we continue to have these desires* and continue to have second-order desires about them. We continue to want to have them. We remain caught up in the web until, gradually, it is reconfigured.

In various places I have presented a different sort of story about the interconnectedness of desires, a counter-picture, that will work at least as well (and arguably better) as an explanation of human grief but will allow for a better match-up with the evidence for animal grief.<sup>9</sup> The counter-picture draws upon the idea of conditional desires rather than second-order desires. In spite of the shorthand that we regularly use when explaining what we want, most if not all of our desires are (upon closer examination) conditional in one way or another. When we want x, what we actually want is to have or to enjoy x while we still want it and not, for example, after the desire has faded. When I want to go to Yankee Stadium for the ball game, what I actually want is to go

---

<sup>7</sup> Troy Jollimore, *Love’s Vision* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 122. On my understanding, Jollimore, is not trying to avoid the evidence for animal love, but simply to say something special about humans.

<sup>8</sup> Bennett Helm, *Love, Friendship and the Self*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 152.

<sup>9</sup> Tony Milligan, ‘Animals and the Capacity for Love’, in *Love and its Objects*, eds. Christian Maurer, Kamila Pacovská and Tony Milligan, (Harmondsworth: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 211-25.

under specified conditions, with my wife Suzanne, with both of us faring well and not so preoccupied with other concerns that our enjoyment will be blocked off. When Aaron Judge hits a ball that is high, far and gone, I do not want to be preoccupied by data sets concerning this year's student intake. Numerous folk tales capture the point: when we meet the devil at the crossroads and make a deal with him, what he gives us is *what we say we want*, but it is not *what we really want*. He gives us wealth but makes us ill, he gives us health but separates us from those we love. He delivers  $x$  when we actually want  $x$  and  $y$ . (Or, more plausibly,  $x$  and  $y_1, \dots, y_n$ .) What we want, when we want most things, can best be represented as a conjunction of circumstances, and not one single circumstance on its own.

The connectedness of circumstances that we desire is integral to both love and grief. When we love someone, we do not simply want them to flourish. (I want that much for strangers, roadside victims, tax collectors and, on occasion, political opponents.) Rather, when we love someone, our desires for their well-being become entangled with all sorts of other desires that we have. We want various things *and* for our loved one to be well. The result is that when our loved one is not well, or when we are caught up in grief over their loss, it will tend to corrupt our enjoyment of even the simplest of things: watching a favourite TV programme, coffee at the coffee shop, settling down with chocolate to watch the game against the Red Sox. Desires concerning such matters, and the desire for the well-being of a loved one connect but, in grief, the desire for the well-being of the other person, a desire on which many other desires have become conditional, can no longer be satisfied. A more or less lengthy process of disentangling ensues and is only ever partially completed. Grief endures but in a more subdued form. Ultimately, we return to the world of ordinary pleasures as more burdened agents.

Notice the way in which the interconnectedness of desires is sustained in this counter-picture, without the necessity for any appeal to higher-order desires. What we want may remain resolutely first-order, and hence accessible to a range of familiar animals. (Dogs would be one obvious example.) Of course, there is a good deal more that we can say about the structure of desires, about the way in which some desires are deeper than others because of the range of connections that they have and the kinds of other desires that are conditional upon their fulfilment. But again, a hierarchical shift is unnecessary and even when made, even when higher-order desires are brought into the picture in the case of humans, their conditionality still needs to be accounted for and does a good deal of the work. For those animals capable of developing the relevant kinds of networks of conditional desires, reciprocation of our love is possible. And so, even if we make this capacity a requirement for any being to be a suitable object of our love, love for animals will still not be ruled out, even if such love ordinarily feels different from our love for other humans. Even if it *ought* to feel different from such love in various ways.<sup>10</sup>

## II. Situating Love within Animal Ethics

Why ethical theory ought to be interested in this (and interested in love of any sort) is, of course, a broader topic with some history and notable contributors (Plato and the later Kant being two examples).<sup>11</sup> Generally, the modern version of the story told is that notions of respect, and relatedly of rights, do important ethical work, but they are asked to do too much work, or *the wrong kind of work*, unless love is also appealed to. Talk about rights, respect and even duty can seem cold and

---

<sup>10</sup> There is a debt to Quine's account of the 'web of belief' in this account of the interconnectedness of desires and something is also owed to David Pugmire's account of emotional depth (which itself has acknowledged Quinean roots), Pugmire *Sound Sentiments: Integrity in the Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 39-45.

<sup>11</sup> Plato's *Lysis*, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* are the classic sources for love as integral to ethics. Strictly, in *The Doctrine of Virtue* (1797) Kant tried to fuse the language of the impersonal and the language of love through the idea of duties of love.

impersonal. Love, on the other hand, is closer to the personal dimensions of ethics. As a point that owes something to Iris Murdoch, our daily lives are, in multiple ways, shaped by our love for others.<sup>12</sup> Deliberation about rights often tends to be much more intermittent, akin to an interruption in the regular pattern of our day-to-day cares. And so, at least in those areas where ethics has a personal dimension and cannot simply appeal to notions of inherent value and universal principles, love retains an important place.

A familiar example from Simone Weil may help to illustrate the point: a father who sells his daughter into prostitution would ordinarily (and justifiably) be reproached with something far more straightforward than a failure to respect her rights, even though such an action would not doubt also involve a failure to respect her rights and talk about the latter might be added as an afterthought.<sup>13</sup> This has been a line of discussion picked up on especially within the Wittgensteinian tradition in its more impressive encounters with issues of animal ethics, with attention drawn towards the ways in which rights talk can soften the harsher realities of betrayal, suffering and animal harm into something more legalistic. Like the characters in J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), we can discuss 'animal rights' over dinner without registering a sense of moral horror about what is done. Meaning is, for a large class of cases, *use* and one use of the language of 'rights' sometimes happens to be *evasion* even if it is not the only use.<sup>14</sup>

Relatedly, rights talk, does not seem to motivate in the way that love does. Most of us, most of the time, will do little to ensure that all of the relevant rights of fellow human agents are respected. Many of us will even routinely fail to assert our own rights on suitable occasions. We are very selective about such matters. The interconnectedness of desires which are integral to love then seems to contrast with the apparent shallowness of a variety of our beliefs about which creatures have rights and about the kind of rights that they might actually have. (Given that they could not be, across the board, identical to the rights that we enjoy, and which are premised upon our special modes of engagement with one another. Animals could not have a right to free speech.) Such points about the *limitations* of rights talk can, of course, be pressed too far. For example, in ways which presuppose the very same moral psychology as theories that are overly dependent upon rights talk. They can presuppose a moral psychology which artificially separates beliefs and desires, the cognitive and the supposedly non-cognitive, and then associates rights talk too exclusively with the former side of the contrast. Yet beliefs too can be deep, bound into our identity, and therefore bound together with the complex fabric of our desires. The two do not fall apart. Drawing upon Weil, the limitations point has been pressed in a particularly strong manner in the feminist-influenced literature on animal ethics. In Kathy Rudy's *Loving Animals* (2011), for example, there is a tendency to endorse love *rather than* rights, or love as a way of dispensing altogether with talk about rights and this seems odd or at least unintentional but misleading. It also has the awkward consequence that we are still permitted to eat the ones we love and they have no rights which might prevent this from taking place when the understanding of the love in question fails to do so.<sup>15</sup>

As a point of clarification, my point here is not to run chapter-and-verse through the literature, but simply to highlight the difference between some familiar ways of setting love and

---

<sup>12</sup> Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) is a key source for this idea. However, in her later work, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992) she attempts to restrict love to the domain of personal moral pilgrimage and ethical being and to keep it apart from areas such as politics.

<sup>13</sup> Simone Weil, 'Human Personality', in Simone Weil, *Selected Essays 1934-43* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Coetzee's novel has become a touchstone for a good deal of these discussions.

<sup>15</sup> This is a guiding consideration in Kathy Rudy, *Loving Animal: Towards a New Animal Advocacy*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

rights against one another and the position from the one that I am advocating. When I write about love and ethics, or love and politics, I am advocating a fuller normative pluralism within which love and rights can (or must) play different, if sometimes overlapping, ethical roles. Rights talk is, after all, one of the standard currencies of politico-legal discussion. Whatever endgame we envisage for animal ethics, we do still need rights talk, even if we do not need *only* rights talk. A different way of putting the point would be to say that love is part of the broader background of valuing without which rights talk is likely to remain a dead letter.

But this is perhaps a little cryptic. Where precisely does love fit within this mixed picture where rights talk remains but is not asked to do all of the work? Precision here is possible only up to a point. Some aspects of the ambiguities of love talk will no doubt remain. However, one place where it might fit is at the juncture of ethics and politics. And here, I am thinking of something broadly Aristotelian, i.e. a preconditions argument. I am thinking about *the ways in which we must see the other* before a commitment to political community is at all possible. Notoriously, the Aristotelian political community is bound together by bonds of political friendship, by *philia politike*. The notion is elusive and a good deal of ink has been spent upon it from more liberal individualist and more communitarian standpoints. On the reading that I favour, what he had in mind was (minimally) the idea that society is made up of various interlocking clusters of social groups, and especially clusters of male friends who are bound to each other (but not to everyone else) by various sorts of *philia* or friendship love. To be able to fit in as a citizen, you have to be able to fit somewhere in relation to these interlocking groups. This means that you have to be, in some sense, seen as lovable, if only in some very rudimentary sense. Not by everyone but by some group of citizens. Without this, the very idea of pursuing a common good, the idea at the very heart of political community, remains empty. This is only one side of the position. Aristotle was also, no doubt, implying that the kinds of friendship available to us, or most readily available, might themselves be inflected by the kind of political system that we live in.

Gender is, of course, was an issue in Aristotle's way of putting matters and a problem with similar attempts to build fraternity into more modern models of political community. The idea that man-to-man might brothers be, seems to take one portion of humanity as the norm and we know which one. Be that as it may, there is something to the Aristotelian inclusion of love within the domain of the political community, and the treatment of the former as a precondition for the latter. More minimally, familiar attempts to situate some (not all) animals *within* the political community, e.g. Donaldson and Kymlicka's *Zoopolis* (2011), will have nothing to fear from such a preconditions argument, just so long as the animals who are candidates for becoming our fellow citizens are well chosen. We might, however, adopt the Aristotelian argument while remaining officially neutral on the idea of animal citizenship or sceptical about its possibility. For clarity, I actually regard the latter as an interesting but ultimately utopian notion. However, to say this is not intended as a dismissive move because all of the great social and political movements have included utopian strands of thought. This is not simply because people in their aggregate are prone to include some who will go to extremes. It is because such utopias can function as placeholders for difficult-to-specify final objectives. They help us to deal with the ambiguities of our best political aspirations. In any case, if animals cannot actually be fellow citizens in a complex modern democracy, the reasons for this are not because they are unsuitable as recipients of the love, and even friendship, of established citizens. They will, in many cases, meet any such requirement. The obstacles to animal citizenship will, instead, be of a different sort.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> For a little more detail on these matters, see Milligan 'The Politicization of Animal Love', in E.Aaltola and J.Hadley (eds.) *Animal Ethics and Philosophy: Questioning the Orthodoxy* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), pp. 185-200.

This does not, of course, rule out all forms of mixed (human/non-human) community or even the reasonableness of thinking of such community in thinner political terms than those of citizenship. The absolute limits of such shared community will then be the limits of ‘creatures we could love’, creatures with whom we could conceive of ourselves as having a common good rather than merely conflicting goods or enjoying co-existence. The practical limits of realisable communities will no doubt be narrower still, set by history and multiple contingencies. Beyond this, we will be left with the difficult challenges of recognition and valuing without the possibility of shared community.

### III. Love and valuing

The overall thought here is that an attitude towards others as suitable recipients of love by humans, or as excluded from such love, tells us something about whether or not those others (who or whatever they may be) are seen in ways which make the idea of a *shared life* of some depth possible. The possibility of love is, as it was for Aristotle, seen as a precondition for other possibilities. Although, here I use this insight in a way that he might not have approved of, as a way to think of what might connect human and non-human animals in deep ways, in spite of our many differences. But just how strong is the linkage? How far can the point be pressed? This is much harder to say. Against too tight a connection, we might consider that, firstly, there clearly are obviously valuable creatures who we cannot love in any sort of reciprocated way. Whales are an example. We cannot relate to them in the ways required for a reciprocated love, yet they matter too. Valuing without even the possibility of love cannot become an afterthought.

Secondly, talk about human love for animals, and about our emotional responsiveness to them, has not always been benevolent. This is a point which the literature on love for animals (e.g. the feminist literature and the marginalia considering love for animals in the analytic sources cited above) has not always appreciated. Thinking ourselves into their world has, historically, been tied to various sorts of dominance. Here we may think of Harry Harlow’s maternal deprivation experiments upon primates, one of Peter Singer’s classic early exemplars of a conspicuously cruel failure to appropriately value animal lives.<sup>17</sup> These experiments were premised upon the reality of animal love and its importance. However, this is a cautionary note of a qualified sort given that the conception of love involved was radically reductionist. Love was *attachment* and little else. Harlow was in the business of levelling humans (and human love) down, rather than raising animals up. However, love also figures, in less reductionist ways, in the morally ambiguous literature on animal training (e.g. in Vicki Hearne) where dominance and affection are closely combined.<sup>18</sup> Talk about love for and by animals may then be ethically significant, but it does not excuse all or lead us to forgive all. It does not remove familiar ethical dilemmas about making sense of inequalities which are tolerable, perhaps unavoidable because of moral failures by prior humans, and those which are intolerable. To speak of love for and by animals still leaves a great deal unsaid about how an appreciation of such love might be taken up.

On the side of a stronger and more positive connection between love and available forms of responsiveness, Raimond Gaita has suggested that *nothing discloses value in the way that love does*. ‘Sometimes we see that it is precious only in the light of someone’s love for it’.<sup>19</sup> Note, here, the more expansive conception of the objects of love or those things we may (defensibly) love. I can certainly understand why Gaita makes this claim. To see a being as lovable is to see the possibility of having relationships of depth with them. But this does not involve the much stronger claim

---

<sup>17</sup> Harry F. Harlow, ‘The Nature of Love’, *American Psychologist* 13 (1958), 673-85.

<sup>18</sup> Vicki Hearne, *Adams Task: Calling Animals by Name*. (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Raimond Gaita, *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1991), xxiv.



that *only* love can disclose value, or the idea that all of our failures are ultimately failures of love. It merely situates love in a distinctive and exemplary way: loving is valuing in its most obvious, tangible and motivating form. Here, I have also shifted from the familiar language associated with Kantian-inspired rights literature, the language of *value*, to the less metaphysically and theory-loaded language of *valuing*. This may be an uncomfortable thought if we are reluctant to see emotion in general (not just love) as integral to ethics. Patterns of emotional responsiveness are, after all, integral to *valuing*, not just in the sense of being causally connected to it. Rather, a patterning of emotional response *partly constitutes* valuing and does not fall apart from it. And, in the case of non-humans, just as in the case of humans, the responsiveness which is constitutive of valuing generally (perhaps necessarily) begins with a responsiveness to particular others. This too will be a source of unease for at least some animal advocates who want one big concept, such as rights, to perform all or most of the ethical work of acknowledging that animals matter in some way which might help us to shape policy and law. Here, I will concede that, by contrast with love and emotion, rights talk generalises more easily and so is often a better fit for such discussions.

If some particular being has rights  $r_1, \dots, r_n$  by virtue of having properties  $p_1, \dots, p_n$ , then any other being with the same properties to at least the same degree will ordinarily also be entitled to these same rights. Love, by contrast, does not carry over in quite the same way. A person who loves their dog does not necessarily love all dogs, let alone all animals with various comparable properties which are possessed to comparable degrees. A person who says that they are an ‘animal lover’ does not literally mean that they love each and every individual creature: rats and rhinos, foxes and flamingos. They mean something more restrictive. Unless we are carried away by partisanship, we will recognise that there is no hypocrisy here, any more than there is hypocrisy when I say that I love Suzanne but not Angela, Pamela, Sandra or Rita. Love may then seem to provide a hopeless inroad to any truly *general* form of ethical concern for animals and the political domain where such concern feeds through into legislation and norms.

Yet, curiously, with non-humans, as with humans, the transition from caring for the particular being to broader forms of concern has been accomplished on many occasions. Indeed, for those who reach the point of a more generalised care (valuing) this is perhaps the normal pathway. It may even be the only pathway for psychologically typical agents. Our deepest concern for others, i.e. the concern most likely to motivate action, always seems to *begin* with love for discrete particular others. And, however partially it does so, such love breaks the egocentricity upon which so much harm to others depends. There may then be no necessary *conceptual* relationship between loving discrete particular others and the valuing of all *other* creatures, but there is often a close causal relationship. If our concern is ultimately for animals themselves, rather than conceptual connectivity, this can be just as important.

This will leave love in play within the political domain, even when the language of rights does happen to be more convenient or does happen to take precedence. And I will close out this discussion with a cautionary tale about what happens when we lose sight of this. What happens is that we risk lapsing into ‘moral schizophrenia’, a condition in which our *motivations* for actions and *justifications* for actions fall apart, with justifications often then given primacy.<sup>20</sup> Typically, agents such as myself come to advocate animal rights, and various changes in the anthropocentric order of things, in response to cruelty, the experience of loving particular animals, and out of some level of imperfect care and compassion. We come to value the lives of animals without any special theory about why we ought to do so. The justifications which we then learn to offer as the only truly legitimate non-sentimental reason for valuing are, however, of a very different sort. They often proceed by appeal to a set of problematic analogies with acknowledged prejudices and claims

---

<sup>20</sup> Michael Stocker, ‘The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories’, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 73.14 (1976), 453-66.

of a metaphysical sort about a concept of inherent value. Such theories do something. They have a place. But that place cannot be *everywhere*. It has little role to play when trying to make sense of why we are motivated to become involved in animal advocacy in the first place. Accordingly, if there is such a thing as an ethics of activism and dissent, it ought surely to be part of such an ethics that we try to avoid becoming too dependent upon such theories, and too divided in our motivations and justifications. Such a division can, after all, tend to cover over our own deepest concerns, concealing them from others and from ourselves.